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to judge as God acts. It is by the general fitness of things we should regulate our private opinions, as we all regulate our watches by the same sun.'

Ever since this conversation, I have endeavoured to judge of every thing like my philosopher. I have found, that it is just the same with our globe and its inhabitants, as with Silesia; every one forms his idea of them according to his education. The astronomer views the world merely as a Dutch

cheese turning round the sun; the soldier sees nothing in it but fields of battle, and promotions; the nobleman, lordships and vassals; the priest, believers and infidels; the merchant, branches of commerce, and good bills; the painter, landscapes; and the epicurean, terrestrial paradises. But the philosopher considers it in its relations to the wants of man; and the men that dwell on it, according to their conduct towards each other.

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#### NOTICES OF NEW WORKS.

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MR. Achermann, the publisher of the *Microcosm of London*, is preparing against next spring, as a companion to that instructive and entertaining work, a history of the arts and manufactures of the British Empire. It is intended to give a history and description of every art or manufacture of any importance, so as to gratify and inform the general reader, and instruct the manufacturer himself. Beside the assistance which the editor has already been promised, in order to render the work as complete as possible, the publisher offers ten gold me-

dals, of the intrinsic value of ten guineas each, for the ten best accounts of any art or manufacture sent him, and twenty silver medals, from the same dies, for the twenty next best.

A French translation of the *Asiatic Researches*, by M. Labeaume, with notes on the oriental, philological and historical parts by Mr. Langle's, and on those relating to natural history and mathematics, by Messrs. Cuvier, Delambre, Lamarck, and Oliver, all members of the Institute, is printing at the imperial press at Paris.

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#### REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

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*Memoirs of Frederick and Margaret Klopsock, translated from the German; by the author of Fragments in Prose and Verse, the third edition. Printed by R. Curtwell, Bath, small 8vo. 236 p.p.*

WHEN we lately reviewed, "the Fragments in Prose and Verse," we gave to the interesting writer, Elizabeth Smith, much praise for the amiable disposition she displayed in this posthumous publication, and particularly for her moderation in censuring others, whose creed might differ from hers. In the preface to these memoirs, written by her friend, M. Bowdler, of Bath, but which preface we are told, "was, before her death, read and approved by her," we are sorry to see a

departure from a spirit of moderation. With a laboured attempt to reconcile us to the extravagance of Klopsock receiving consolation from writing letters to his deceased wife, although it is probable that he afterwards forgot this foolish superstition, when he transferred his affections to the object of a second matrimonial engagement, the writer of the preface attacks those whose enthusiasm is not as extravagant as her own, and falls foul of "that cold scepticism, which now assumes the venerable name of philosophy," and whose adherents she consigns "to the darkness which they prefer." This appears to be neither fair reasoning, nor fair-dealing. If she have faith, which to more sober and cooler heads appears to be enthusiasm, let

her have this faith to herself, but she has no right to suppose that the possession of such a creed, as she and Klopstock possessed, gives an exclusive title to fortitude, to support the many grievous trials of life. Happily for mankind, true fortitude and patient resignation are not alone appropriated by the disciples of enthusiasm.

We have known some, who under the pressure of the afflictions to which we are liable, have been unable to draw consolation from the hackneyed topics, which superstition and enthusiasm are ever ready to produce, but which seldom make a lasting impression on their votaries, these tendencies being violent in the paroxysm, but seldom lasting in the impression, yet these cold sceptics, as they are tauntingly called, have derived support from considerations producing less flashy but more durable effects. We totally condemn this mode of reasoning, which is too common in the world, and of which the writer of this preface affords a specimen, of endeavouring to establish that all virtuous motives, and even all power to enjoy the common blessings and consolations of life are confined to those who possess the Shibboleth of their party, or are able to use the slang of the language of the initiated. Besides the intolerance of this attempt, the endeavour, if successful, must have an injurious tendency on the progress of human intellect, as this class of people endeavour to make the human mind retrogressive, and to introduce the superstitions of former ages. If it were not for the exercise of the press, which is beneficially used to expose such retrograde motions, we are sometimes inclined to fear that in the 19th century we might be in danger of going back to the darkness of the middle ages, and in the words of the preface, be again willing to listen, "to the sweet illusion of the indulgence in the little arts, by which the mourner tried to sooth his grief by letters, from the living to the dead." Indeed we are not fond of the introduction of German literature, nor approve of the ephemeral taste which has given to it a favourable reception. German mysticism, like German romance, has its gloomy haunted castles, its winding corridors, and dismal narrow passages. It thrills the mind with horror, and for a season

produces a temporary suspension of the cooler judgment, till roused from the delusion, the mind resumes its wonted powers.

We have entered our objections at greater length to this preface, because they apply in a considerable degree to the sentiments of Frederick Gottlieb Klopstock himself. His religion appears to have been the religion of a poet, made up of *feeling*, as his admirers call it, but in our vocabulary we prefer to denominate it a religion of *fancy* as most descriptive of his state. We have no objection to the warmth of his heart, but we think a cooler head would have been of advantage to him. A religion of feeling must necessarily be unstable, and subject to all the variability of human passions. Like a spring-day with alternate sunshine and showers, enthusiasm has its high and low fits; sometimes soaring in the clouds, and at other times shut up in dungeons. We think an even, steady course is more likely to produce the permanent advantages of a well trained mind, duly regulated and disciplined, and a disposition better fitted to pass through the chequered scenes of life, than if feeling were cherished at the expense of judgment. In making these remarks we wish to remember our own axioms of toleration, introduced at the beginning of this article, and if some minds are trained to virtue by such desultory steps, we do not object to the good fruits produced, because it is not exactly in our own way. We only enter our caveat against the exclusive claims adduced by each party, of estimating all that is valuable only by the productions of their own garden.

After the preface by M. Bowdler, which savours so much of intolerance, and has not a little smack of superstition and bigotry, we are relieved by perusing the life of Klopstock, written by Elizabeth Smith. Here we are not disposed to retract the opinion we had formerly expressed of this amiable young woman. The life is written in a pleasing style, and though not capable of entering into all the theological views of the writer, we meet with nothing of that obtrusive intolerance which disgusted us in the preface. The life is a well written, and instructive

narrative, the materials for which were principally furnished by Dr. Munssen; but these materials are pleasingly arranged by the taste and modest piety of the editor, whose fragments and other writings leave us cause to think highly of the benevolence of her heart, and the solidity of her acquirements. While reading her part of the work, we breathed a freer air than when we toiled through the preface.

Now follow the letters, which make the larger part of the volume. The first are letters from Klopstock to Bodmer, of no very prominent interest. Then we have some letters between him and his wife Meta. They breathe mutual affection, and will be read with pleasure, on account of their speaking the language of the heart, after making some deductions for the overstraining of feeling or fancy in some of them. Several letters follow, written by different persons, giving an account of her death in childhood. In this series we especially notice a letter to Klopstock, from Funke, who in his ardour to present consolation to his friend, enters into the most unauthorised conjectures on the subject of the intention of Providence in the death of Meta, and of her child; and forms a scheme of the divine councils, as if short-sighted, finite man could fathom the depths of infinity. We give a specimen of the curious mysticism, not uncommon in other parts of these letters, in the following extract from this letter:

“According to these ideas, those marriages must be considered as the happiest, in which each party, in his proper sphere, has an equal capacity for perfection, and which have laid in this life, the foundation of their eternal friendship. How great an influence both these causes must have on their earthly happiness, I leave to yourself to judge; for you best can. In this point of view, you, my excellent friend, must be one of the happiest of men; for was she not, as Cramer justly said, “Klopstock in feminine beauty!” And of this I am certain that your connection is one of those few, whose duration will be eternal, for this cause you were to meet on earth, and possess each other as long as needful to lay the deepest foundation for the tenderest

and strongest—for an everlasting friendship. How perfectly have you fulfilled this destiny! But that other views might also be fulfilled, she was to be translated to the world of spirits before her friend. There was to be another soul, sprung from them, on whom the love of both might centre, to augment their happiness. That this also might have its proper perfections, the first embryo alone of its existence was unfolded, and so soon as the tender bud was formed in the maternal bosom, it was transplanted to a happier climate, and tended by its glorified mother and the angels. Without the aptitude to err and sin, this infant angel, who, perhaps, is an image of the united virtues of those from whom he sprung, enters into the society and instruction of the perfect. Free from the mortal covering, he learns to know the Godhead with higher powers, and the universe with purer and finer organs. The tender mother, perhaps, will one day meet you with this darling of her heart. This I confidently hope to hear from you in future, if I be not myself a spectator of the heavenly scene.”

We object to dignify this spirit of wild conjecture, with the name of piety. It is the romance of religion.

Meta wrote some letters from the dead to the living, which are here reprinted. Under different assumed characters she expresses herself on a variety of subjects; these letters appear liable to similar objections, which we made to the preface, as being in some places deficient in liberality, and an enlarged spirit of toleration, particularly in the letter to Melissa, on the choice of a husband. These letters probably suggested the thought to him to write letters to her after her decease, which we have already mentioned are defended in the preface, and which may be viewed as the very consummation of the extravagance of religious speculation.

We have extended our critique on this book, further than some of our readers may think necessary, more especially if they have not read the work, but as it has been in pretty extensive circulation in this country, and has attained to a third edition, and as it contains something that is agreeable with much that is of a mixed or doubtful

ful nature, we have entered more at length into the subject. We think a check to the current of popular feeling, may at times be necessary to produce deeper reflection, and prevent the heedlessness attending a want of ex-

amination. It is a good maxim that a man should be religious, but not superstitious, and we think the general tendency of this book may lead to the bewildering labyrinths of superstition.

K.

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